

March 16, 2012

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for accepting my written testimony in opposition to Bill 5541, An Act Concerning Services Provided by Dental Professionals and Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners. My name is Dr. Stephen Moran; I am a dentist practicing in Connecticut since 1985.

Section 6 of this bill identifies duties that will allow an ADHP to do the following:

1. Diagnose
2. Prepare baby teeth and adult teeth by cutting them with a drill.
3. Partially remove the nerves in baby teeth and adult teeth.
4. Extract baby teeth and adult teeth.
5. Prescribe medicines.
6. Perform some orthodontic services, i.e., placing space maintainers.

After nearly 27 years of providing dental care, it is my professional opinion that these duties require a level of knowledge, skill, and proficiency that can be attained only by graduating from a doctorate level program; that is, by earning a D.D.S or a D.M.D. degree. A masters level program is not sufficient to make an individual competent to deliver these services.

Section 6 also allows for the scope of practice to be determined largely by an agreement between an ADHP and a dentist. This provision will allow a multitude of different practice parameters, with little statewide standardization. Additionally, Section 6 allows for payments to be made directly to the ADHP for services performed in nursing homes and chronic care facilities. The combination of the two will permit, in practical terms, independent practice by an ADHP.

I also believe, that due to economic incentives, most ADHPs will eventually flee the public sector in favor of more lucrative jobs in the private sector. This means that the returns on the investments by any State of Connecticut sponsored ADHP programs will be subpar or unrealized. A far more cost effective and efficient way to maintain the desired level of dental care in the public sector would be for the State to contract with dentists, and perhaps offer student loan forgiveness or reduction, instead of creating a new program. An ADHP program will be expensive to initiate, cost ineffective to maintain, and will not provide the high level of care that Connecticut citizens now receive from dentists.

I respectfully ask that you vote against Bill 5541. Thank you.

Very truly yours,
Stephen M. Moran, D.D.S.
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